## MATERIA MEDICA AND PHARMACY.

9. *Mode of preparing Tannate of Iron.*—M. V. Gaddi gives the following mode of preparing the tannate of iron:—A very pure sulphate of iron is made by the action of dilute sulphuric acid on iron filings; from this sulphate, by means of carbonate of soda, a carbonate of iron is precipitated, which is washed several times, and then dried on the stove. It is now pulverized and thrown by small portions at a time into a boiling solution of very pure tannic acid in a porcelain vessel—the proportions used being very nearly five parts of the carbonate to one of the acid—or 440 parts of the carbonate to 90 of the tannic acid. The fluid is to be stirred constantly till the effervescence ceases. It is afterwards exposed to a heat equal to the boiling point of water, till it acquires the consistence of thick soup. It is then withdrawn from the fire and poured on porcelain plates, and dried with the assistance of heat. The tannate of iron thus obtained is of a crimson colour, insipid, insoluble, uncrystalized, though before being dried it appears in long needles. It may be administered either suspended in syrup, or still more conveniently in the form of pills. The dose is from eight to thirty grains a day. It acts more rapidly in persons of sanguine temperament. —*Monthly Jour. Med. Sc.*, Nov. 1846, from *Bulletino delle Scienze Mediche.*

10. *Effect of Matico-leaf in a case of obstinate Hemorrhage.*—The patient was a boy between four and five years old, who, in falling, had bit his tongue, the consequence of which was an oozing of blood which, when the child was brought to Mr. Hamilton, had continued for two days, to the great alarm of his family, as his brother had died from hemorrhage occasioned by a slight injury of the nose, and the boy himself had before nearly bled to death from some slight wound about the mouth. Actual cautery first, and then a ligature, applied by means of a sewing-needle, had each but a temporary effect, and finally the hemorrhage was stopped by persuading the child to keep sucking a piece of alum for an hour or two. It was long before the child recovered his strength.

The child was brought a second time to Mr. Hamilton, having again bit his tongue three days before, during which time a continual oozing of blood had gone on, causing a perfectly blanched appearance, notwithstanding that nitrate of silver had been applied, and a piece of alum had been sucked as before. After in vain trying pressure, Mr. Hamilton took a piece of matico-leaf (piper angustifolium) and applied the lower surface to the bleeding point, and retaining it there as long as the child would keep the tongue quiet, which was not half a minute. He then found that the blood had ceased to flow, and that the small spangle of matico-leaf adhered to the tongue. It fell off in half an hour, when there was scarcely any appearance of bleeding; a second piece was applied, and the hemorrhage completely stopped.—*Monthly Jour. Med. Sci.*, Nov., from *Dublin Hospital Gaz.*

11. *Ergotine as a Hæmostatic.*—On the occasion of M. Bonjean's presenting the French Academy of Sciences with an account of an additional experiment he has made with *Ergotine*, in which the bleeding from the carotid of a horse, divided through a third of its circumference, was at once arrested by the application of ergotine, M. Velpeau delivered the following sensible and pertinent observations:—

"What M. Bonjean says of ergotine has been said by an infinity of other persons concerning different substances. Hæmostatic means of a *real* efficacy are nevertheless as rare as ever. The error arises from these authors having forgotten two things in their experiments. 1. In animals, the plasticity of the blood is much greater than in man, whence it follows that means which will arrest hemorrhage in the one, may easily fail to do so in the other. All those who have made experiments on living animals know that, in the horse, the ox, the sheep, for example, the largest wounds of arteries rarely give rise to mortal hemorrhage. The blood, ceasing to flow almost of its own accord, leads the public and inexperienced authors to believe that it is the *means* or *remedy* employed which has closed the artery. Thus, what powders, waters, liquids, what arcana of every kind, have been vaunted at first as infallible; and then, after a searching examination, rejected as useless? 2. In man, many arterial hemorrhages also cease either spontaneously or under the exertion of mere compression, without our being obliged to have recourse to the ligature; so that it is easy to attribute to a pretended hæmostatic substance a result which takes place quite independently of its employment.

"I have neither cause nor desire to throw any doubt upon the value of M. Bonjean's experiments: but practice has been so often deceived by similar announcements, that it behooves the Academy to accept them with due reserve. I must add, that the practitioners who have tried *ergotine* or the *ergot of rye* have as yet derived nothing conclusive from its use. When, in *uterine hemorrhage*, the ergot proves useful, it does so by inducing contraction of the uterus, and not by any special action it exerts on the blood or on the arteries. Thus we see the question of surgical hæmostatics is at once a very complex and a delicate one; and we should not receive facts concerning it without a certain degree of distrust, and only give them a very limited publicity, until they have been tested by a more mature examination."—*Med. Chirurg. Rev.*, Oct, from *Comptes Rendus*, 6th July, 1846.

12. *Modus operandi of Opium in the treatment of hemorrhage.*—By Dr. W. GRIFFIN.—"Of all the wonderful influences exerted by opium, that by which it sustains the powers of life when sinking from hemorrhage, and arrests the flow of blood, is the most extraordinary. When after severe uterine hemorrhage, the countenance is sunk, the eye glassy and hollow, the lips blanched, the skin cold, and the whole person corpse-like, when the pulse is almost gone at the wrist, when every beat of the heart is scarcely perceptible, and stimulants, even brandy or rectified spirits, are either vomited or uninfluential, there remains yet one remedy capable of restoring the patient to life, and that is opium. I believe its power of saving life under these circumstances depends principally on its specific property of producing congestion in the brain. That amount of congestion by which it occasions apoplexy, when given in large doses to persons in health, seems only sufficient to sustain the necessary tension of the cerebral vessels in those who are dying from hemorrhage. Persons die in cases of hemorrhage, not so much from mere debility of the heart's action, as from the loss of nervous powers in the brain consequent to it. The opium in such cases not only stimulates the heart's action, but restores a sufficient degree of tension to the vessels of the brain to prevent faintness; and, by the judicious repetition of the remedy, life is preserved on the very borders of death. There are no cases in which opium can be given so freely and so fearlessly as in these. When the danger is imminent, five grains may be given at the first dose, and two or three every hour or half hour afterwards, until the pulse becomes distinct, the breathing easier, and the tossing about in the bed is allayed. It is hardly necessary to observe, that in such cases, in conjunction with the use of opium, the administration of warm wine or brandy, with heat to the extremities, is highly useful, if not essential."—*Medical and Physical Problems.*

13. *Castor Oil—Substitute for.*—The mildness and certainty of operation of castor oil give it peculiar advantages in the treatment of many diseases; but very often its tendency to produce vomiting prevents it from being employed. To remedy this inconvenience, M. PAROLA proposes the substitution of an extract, an ethereal, and an alcoholic tincture of castor-oil seeds, for the oil itself. The result of his experiments on himself and on numerous sick and convalescent individuals is as follows:—1st. That the ethereal and alcoholic tinctures have a purgative action four times as strong as the oil obtained by expression, and that they are not so apt to produce vomiting, nor so irritant as the ordinary oil. 2d. That these new preparations remain unalterable for a long period without reference to climate or season. 3d. That the ethero-alcoholic extract possesses a purgative action comparatively weaker than the marc or pulp from which it is extracted, proving that the seeds contain a principle which is insoluble in alcohol or ether. 4th. The advantage of the new preparations, so far as relates to their not causing vomiting, is easily explained by the smallness of the dose in which they are administered.—*Gazette Médicale de Paris*, Feb. 7th, 1846.